



## Hurst Green Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021-2028 Strategic Environmental Assessment Adoption Statement

23 December 2025

### 1. Introduction

1.1. Rother District Council made the [Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan](#) (HGNP) part of the Development Plan at Full Council on 15 December 2025 following a favourable outcome at Referendum.

1.2. This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 Regulation 16 (1)<sup>1</sup>, which requires a statement to be produced on adoption of a plan or programme, to detail:

- a) How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- b) How the environmental report has been taken into account;
- c) How opinions expressed through public consultation have been taken into account;
- d) The reasons for choosing this plan or programme as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- e) The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

### 2. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan

2.1. The [Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\)](#) for the HGNP sets out the baseline information about the Parish of Hurst Green as the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Plan identifies the environmental issues affecting the plan area.

2.2. Additionally, the HGNP SEA has been informed through detailed Evidence Base Documents which identify key plans, policies, and guidance, which have influenced the content of the Neighbourhood Plan. The issues identified informed the setting of environmental objectives, which the objectives for the HGNP were assessed against. These objectives have helped ensure that the most sustainable location options were identified. The identification of environmental issues also helped shape the policy requirements for each site that is allocated or identified in the Hurst Green Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/regulation/16/made>

### **3. How the Environmental Report has been taken into account**

3.1. The SEA has contributed to the development of the Hurst Green Parish Neighbourhood Plan in that it provides a distinct assessment, specifically against environmental objectives, independent of the plan objectives, of the site options for possible allocation, and of the policies which make up the Plan itself.

3.2. In 2023, Hurst Green Council prepared the SEA alongside the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. The SEA process began with a request for a Screening Opinion, which the Town Council sent to Rother District Council. Upon receiving advice from the Statutory Consultees, Rother District Council confirmed on 17 December 2025 that the Neighbourhood Plan would need a SEA. Aecom Ltd prepared the assessment on behalf of the Parish Council. It was consulted upon at both Regulation 14 and 16 stages of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations<sup>2</sup>. Statutory Environmental Bodies and other key consultees were invited to make representations.

3.3. The baseline for the SEA was also informed by the Sustainability Appraisal of Rother District Council's Core Strategy, with those environmental objectives of greatest relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan selected.

3.4 A SEA Environmental Report was submitted with the HGNP. A draft version of this report was consulted on at Reg 14 alongside the draft HGNP, and amendments made in the light of comments received. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was required for the Plan due to its potential impact on the High Weald National Landscape and the number of natural and historic assets within the Parish. The SEA Report has considered options for policy issues such as the development boundary and site allocations and assessed the impact of the HGNP policies. It concludes that the overall impacts on the environment are largely positive and that there will be no worsening of existing issues connected with the environment. SEA and HRA are the main environmental requirements in EU law and Directives that neighbourhood plans need to comply with, and it is considered that the PNP has complied with the Basic Conditions with regard to being compatible with EU obligations.

### **4. How opinions expressed through public consultation have been addressed**

4.1. Key Environmental Bodies: The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001 requires that authorities referred to in Article 6(3)<sup>3</sup> shall be consulted when deciding upon the scope and the level of detail in the SEA. In England, the key bodies are: Environment Agency; Historic England; and Natural England. These bodies were all consulted by Rother District Council when screening/scoping the Neighbourhood Plan prior to Regulation 14. They were also consulted during respective public consultations throughout the Neighbourhood Plan process.

4.2. Public Participation: Article 6(2) of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires the public to have an early and effective opportunity within appropriate timeframes to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme, and the accompanying Environmental Report, before the adoption of the plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/637/regulation/14/made>

<sup>3</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042>

4.3. The SEA was consulted upon alongside the Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan for 6 weeks at the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 stage (27 July – 17 September 2022), and for a further 8 weeks alongside the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Submission Consultation (25 October to 6 December 2024).

## **5. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as ‘made’, in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with**

5.1. Paragraph 12(2b) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004<sup>4</sup> requires environmental reports to examine reasonable alternatives for the plan or programme while taking account of the objectives and the scope of the plan or programme. This statement is required to set out the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as ‘made’ in light of other reasonable alternatives.

5.2. At both stages of the neighbourhood planning process, policies were assessed against alternatives such as not allocating sites or allocating other sites.

5.3. In respect of the SEA the Examiner concluded that *“I am satisfied that the basic conditions regarding compliance with European legislation, including the 2017 introduced basic condition regarding compliance with the Habitat Regulations, are met. I am also content that the plan has no conflict with the Human Rights Act.”*

5.4. The final HGNP has been ‘made’ in line with the recommendations of the Examiner which stated as follows: *“I am therefore delighted to recommend to Rother District Council, that the Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan, as modified by my recommendations, should proceed, in due course, to referendum.* He also recommended that the referendum area be Hurst Green Parish.

5.5 The HRA screening was carried out by RDC in September 2018, with the conclusion that the proposed neighbourhood plan would have no adverse effect on any Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs (‘candidate SACs’, ‘possible SACs’, ‘potential SPAs’) or a Ramsar wetland.

## **6. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme**

6.1. The SEA process does not finish with the publication of the document. Under Regulation 17 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation 2004<sup>4</sup>, the HGNP will be subject to on-going monitoring. This will be carried out jointly by Hurst Green Parish Council and Rother District Council. The latter will monitor the continuing suitability of the Neighbourhood Plan’s policies, including in terms of significant environmental effects, through its Local Plan Monitoring Report.

## **7. Further Information**

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<sup>4</sup> [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukreg/2004/1200/contents/part2/section12/paragraph2b)

7.1. Hurst Green Parish Neighbourhood Plan, the Strategic Environmental Assessment and related documents can be viewed online at: [Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan – Rother District Council](#).